Thomas A. Edison Papers Digital Edition

Edison-Miller Family Records

Family Records Series, Part V

[F5G01-F] Charles Edison (1929-1936)

Family Records Series -- Edison Family Papers -- Other Family Members

Title
[F5G01-F] Charles Edison (1929-1936)

Description
The selected documents in this folder cover the years 1929-1931 and 1936. There is also one undated item that was probably written during the mid-1910s. The documents consist primarily of notes exchanged between Thomas Edison and his son Charles. A 14-page communication from June 15, 1931, discusses Charles's problems with George E. Stringfellow, vice president and general manager of Thomas A. Edison, Inc. A 1936 letter by William H. Mason, former superintendent of the Edison Portland Cement Co. and inventor of Masonite, contains reminiscences about his work with Edison in 1902-1903.

URL

https://edisondigital.rutgers.edu/folder/F5G01-F

Identifier

F5G01-F

Type

Family Records

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Is Part Of

Family Records Series -- Edison Family Papers -- Other Family Members

Alternative Title

Charles Edison (1929-1936)

Has Version

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[F5G01AA] Letter, 1914-1916

Title
[F5G01AA] Letter, 1914-1916

Author
Edison, Thomas Alva

Recipient
Edison, Charles

Mentioned

- Silzer, George C
- Blish, Henry Herbert

Date
1914-1916

Type
Letter

Subject

- Edison-Miller family
- Sales and service
- Phonograph

Folder ID
F5G01-F

Microfilm ID
286:99

Document ID
F5G01AA

URL
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Timestamp
1 January 1914

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Wiccoles —.

If arrangements can
made with Dudger
Count of him spend
& Itineraghly self from
the new proposed
methods of Remediating

Sincerely

Might as well start
right —
Saying nothing to Wiccoles about it

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[F5G01AB], Letter from Charles Edison to Thomas Alva Edison, October 12th, 1929

Title
[F5G01AB], Letter from Charles Edison to Thomas Alva Edison, October 12th, 1929

Author
Edison, Charles

Recipient
Edison, Thomas Alva

Date
1929-10-12

Type
Letter

Subject

- Edison-Miller family
- Testing and quality control

Folder ID
F5G01-F

Microfilm ID
286:100

Document ID
F5G01AB

URL
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Timestamp
12 October 1929

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Oct 12/29

Father -

This is a summary of part of the data I showed you Thursday -

We are working on the "Rudder" figures & other data -

E.

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[F5G01AC], Letter from Charles Edison to Thomas Alva Edison, June 17th, 1931

Title
[F5G01AC], Letter from Charles Edison to Thomas Alva Edison, June 17th, 1931

Author
Edison, Charles

Recipient
Edison, Thomas Alva

Mentioned
Stringfellow, George Edward

Date
1931-06-17

Type
Letter

Subject
Labor

Folder ID
F5G01-F

Microfilm ID
286:101

Document ID
F5G01AC

URL
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Timestamp
17 June 1931

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June 17/31

Father.

Here's a little something I wish you would read before talking to Stringfellow.

F

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[F5G01AD], Letter from Charles Edison to Thomas Alva Edison, June 15th, 1931

Title
[F5G01AD], Letter from Charles Edison to Thomas Alva Edison, June 15th, 1931

Author
Edison, Charles

Recipient
Edison, Thomas Alva

Mentioned

- New York Central Railroad
- Lehigh Valley Railroad Co
- Walker Vehicle Co
- Stringfellow, George Edward
- Maxwell, William

Date
1931-06-15

Type
Letter

Subject

- Labor
- Electric battery

Folder ID
F5G01-F

Microfilm ID
286:102

Document ID
F5G01AD

URL
https://edisondigital.rutgers.edu/document/F5G01AD

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Timestamp
15 June 1931

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[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

June 15/31

Father

The other day I gave you a note that said that I was very much afraid that Stringfellows usefulness to us was nearing the end unless he completely changed his aspects. That the apparent success he had made of the Storage Battery Biz had turned his head.

If there is any way to make him again a useful citizen I'm for doing it But I very strongly feel that it is too late. Some muddled heads

C.1

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

are like balloons that can be punctured but he, I think, is more like a loaf of bread.

There is a good deal of the Machiavelli about Stringfellow. He has a personal ambition that brooks no interference. Maxwell was a poor thing made of putty compared to GES. He would rather win an argument than to be right. If to win it he has to spread lies of his & everybody else's

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

time over "needle down" & "needle dam" he does not. He doesn't care how he disrupts any of our other business arrangements as long as he gets what he wants in the battery. He has become so sure of himself that what he wants is - ipso facto - Right If anybody wants anything different they are just wrong. Accordingly he will neither take nor for our convenience if this was in reverse thing he doesn't agree to -

117,343
C3J

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

If he is overruled he
begins a kind of guerilla
warfare calculated to
discredit every body &
everything that stands in
his way.

Now I like fighters
and tough eggs. But
I like clean fighters
and fighters that fight
about really important
things. But I dont
like endless litigation
about Trivial things that
could be settled in
five minutes if there
was any desire to settle.

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

In all his dealings with our internal organization he acts like a man who, wanting to sell you a piece of real estate first brings you into court to defend a charge of some sort of nuisance, like the Spring pond.

Stumpfellow has not hesitated to double cross us on more than one occasion. I don't trust him anymore. And yet if I accused him of double crossing he would say that he

117343

[5]

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

couldn't be a "yes" man -
that his action were
inspired thru wanting
to see profits maintained
in the Strange Battery -
That irrespective of what
others wanted he knew
what had to be done
and did it etc. All
that would sound very
good if I didn't know
that the real reason
was something entirely
different -
From the day that
he came to Orange ..
and stood out for
an employment Contract

C6J

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

and work, I have had to control my feelings and have forced the rest of the organization to do the same - But the times when this has been necessary have greatly increased in the last two years, and being human, there may come a time when I will burst out like small pox. And if he wins that argument someone besides myself would have to take over the responsibility for the S B Co as Stupfully

CTJ

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

would pay no more attention
to me than a rabbit
– except on the race-course.

I feel very much like
the Jew who had a
partner who was a
brilliant money maker.
The partner had high
handed things for a
long time – One night
the Jew came home
& found the partner
in bed with his wife.
He shook his fist
at the partner & said.
" Isidore I've stood
for a lot from you

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

and I'll stand over
this, but I want to
warn you, some
day you will go
too far!"

However things aren't
quite as bad as that.
I can "stand over" quite
a lot more from
Stringfellow provided

1. You understand the
   situation
2. Provided the damage
   his swelled head
   is doing is limited
   to within our

CJ.

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

organization and
is not effecting
sales

3. Provided when something
has to be done that
he is not in sympathy
with I don't have
to back down even
if he threatens to quit.

Now here is what I intended
to do.
For a long time I
have felt that GES
was the kind That

CIVJ

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

Could get along with
his friends but not
his relatives - That is,
I felt that he had his
heart not on being
General Manager of
the Eastern Edison Picture
and ~~didn't~~ that part
of the process of getting
There was to discredit
every body in the organization
But when it came to
outsiders he was an
entirely different man.

I am very seriously
doubting That more =
I believe we many

CIT

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

find that some of the decreased sales are due to the same sort of wrong words and petty quarrelling being practiced on our customers as he practices internally in the organization. Even if he doesn't quarrel with body, like a small headed school teacher - Maxwell is a case in point.

What I propose to do is to find out first various good

117,343
C17

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

Customers in the past
who are not buying
orders & find out
why. I am going
to do this without
stamp fulfillment helps
as I would get every
explanation (most possibly
the real one from him.

I hope we will find
that he is still a
fine salesman because
we are a long way
from being ready to
make a change.
But if certain rumors
I have has come to

C133

[ATTACHMENT/ENCLOSURE]

1

read about N.Y. Central
Walker Towers, Lehigh
Valley etc Turn out
to have any foundation
to them. There may
be a lot of others.

If he is hunting Rabbits
there is no use
putting up with the
veteran rabbit mooching business
and we will be forced
to make a change.

Z.

C141

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[F5G01AE], Letter from William Horatio Mason to Charles Edison, August 27th, 1936

Title
[F5G01AE], Letter from William Horatio Mason to Charles Edison, August 27th, 1936

Author
Mason, William Horatio

Recipient
Edison, Charles

Mentioned
Edison, Thomas Alva

Date
1936-08-27

Type
Letter

Subject

- TAE health
- Reminiscences (after 1886)
- Newspapers, books, other publications
- Cement

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F5G01AE

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27 August 1936

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C.E. AUG 31 1936

MASONITE
CORPORATION
LAUREL, MISSISSIPPI

WILLIAM H. MASON
VICE PRESIDENT

August 27, 1936

Mr. Charles Edison
Edison Laboratories
Orange, New Jersey

My dear Charles:

Some time ago one of my friends told me of a broadcast he had heard on the life of Edison and the development of the long kiln. I have been able to get a copy of the script of this broadcast and am very much interested in it as I had a lot to do with the experimenting on that apparatus. There is one thing that I think should be corrected when this broadcasting is started again, and is also wrong in the Life of Edison written by Martin & Dyer, although this was a typographical error, and it is the incident of Edison's writing up the notes of work to be done in the Edison cement plant. Since this was one of the most remarkable exhibitions of memory that I have ever seen, I want to tell you of it, as I remember it, and I feel sure that my memory is very clear on this subject.

About 1902, when the cement plant was supposed to be finished and ready to operate, Mr. Edison arrived at the plant from Orange one morning at 10:30 o'clock and told me he wanted to go all through the plant. We started at the quarry, then went through the crushing plant, drying plant, kilns, stone storage, grinding plant and cement storage house. This took until about four thirty o'clock in the afternoon with about half an hour off for lunch. He did not take any notes but we

Ch. Ed. 360909+360922
360922

INSPECTED EACH PIECE OF MACHINERY IN DETAIL. HE THEN DEFT ON THE TRAIN FOR ORANGE AS HE WAS DUE THERE ABOUT SEVEN O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING. THIS HAPPENED ON SATURDAY.

I UNDERSTAND THAT WHEN HE ARRIVED IN ORANGE, HE TOOK SOME OF THE THICK LABORATORY NOTEBOOKS, STARTED IN WRITING, WROTE ALL THAT NIGHT AND ALL THE NEXT DAY UNTIL LATE IN THE AFTERNOON. IN THIS TIME, HE HAD COMPLETELY FILLED THREE OF THE LABORATORY NOTE BOOKS. THE NEXT DAY, HE PUT THREE CLERKS TO WORK, EACH ONE COPYING ONE OF THESE BOOKS IN LONG HAND AND IT TOOK THEM THREE DAYS TO FINISH THE JOB. HE THEN SENT THESE NOTEBOOKS UP TO ME WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO REPORT DAILY ON THE WORK WHICH HAD BEEN ACCOMPLISHED ON EACH ITEM. THERE WERE OVER 6000 ITEMS IN HIS NOTEBOOKS AND NOT "600" AS STATED IN THE LIFE OF EDISON. THE INSTRUCTIONS WERE TO REPORT DAILY BY NUMBER ON EACH ITEM AND I HAD TO PUT THREE MEN ON THE JOB TO INSPECT THIS WORK AND REPORT ON THE VARIOUS ITEMS. WE FORWARDED TO ORANGE EACH DAY THREE OR FOUR TYPEWRITTEN PAGES LISTING THE ITEMS BY NUMBER AND EACH NUMBER WAS TO BE MARKED WITH A LINE, A RED MARK WHEN THE MATERIAL WAS NOT ON HAND TO FINISH THE JOB AND A BLUE MARK, WHEN THE MATERIAL WAS ON HAND BUT THE JOB NOT COMPLETED. THIS CONTINUED FOR SEVERAL MONTHS UNTIL THE ENTIRE MILL WAS COMPLETED.

ON MY WEEKLY VISITS TO ORANGE, THE OLD MAN WOULD GET OUT HIS BOOKS, WITH THE MARKS ON THEM, WHICH HAD BEEN KEPT UP BY SOME ASSISTANTS AND WE WOULD DISCUSS VARIOUS THINGS.

THIS, TO ME, IS SUCH A REMARKABLE EXHIBITION OF MEMORY THAT I THINK IT SHOULD BE RECORDED. I HAVE NO DOUBT BUT THAT IF YOU GO THROUGH THE LABORATORY NOTEBOOKS, YOU WILL FIND THESE THREE BOOKS WRITTEN, AS I REMEMBER IT, IN THE WINTER OF 1902 OR 1903.

VERY TRULY YOURS,

W H Mason

There should also be the duplicate copies at Shrewsbury

WHM:MF